The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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AN OLD TOWN AND ITS OLD STORY

IN our own land we have no very old towns. White people have lived here only about three hundred years; those who lived here before the coming of white people seldom built any towns at all, and the few remaining traces of ancient homes have no stories belonging to them. But at the other side of the ocean there are towns where people had lived, generation after generation, for hundreds and hundreds of years before Columbus sailed from Spain. And around many such ancient towns cluster stories of wonderful and beautiful things which there came to pass.

One famous old town is in the land that borders the eastern end of the great Mediterranean Sea. A great many American travelers have been there; perhaps you may sometime go there yourself. Ocean steamships enter the Mediterranean at its western end and take passengers to the far-eastern end. There one lands; and the little town of Bethlehem is about forty miles up-country from the nearest seaport. It is on a hill, in a region that is full of hills and valleys; and in olden times a high wall of stone, standing all around the town, protected it from enemy soldiers or from bands of robbers.

The houses of Bethlehem folk are built quite close together. The streets are very narrow. Many of the townspeople own farms and pastures within a few miles, and they go out each day for their work; sometimes their work keeps them out all night; but their homes are in the close-built community. There are almost no farmhouses scattered along the Judean country roads, as we have them in our own land.

A great many interesting stories are connected with Bethlehem and with people who used to live there. One of the oldest of all the stories is about a girl from another land still farther away—a girl whose young husband had died, and who came to Bethlehem with her husband's mother, of whom she was devotedly fond. The older woman had been brought up there and loved the place, but Ruth was at first a stranger. You can read for yourself the story of how she went to work to help Naomi, and how she married a rich and kindly farm-owner, if you turn to the Book of Ruth in the Bible. The story ends by telling how Ruth had a little son, whom they named Obed.

Obed afterwards lived in Bethlehem, and married, and he had a son called Jesse. Then Jesse later had several sons, and one of them, called David, became the favorite hero of the whole country. The Bible contains all sorts of fascinating stories about David: how, as a boy, he used to look after his father's sheep in one of the hillside pastures near the town; how he killed a lion and a bear; how he fought and beat a famous giant, a fearsome enemy of the townsfolk and of the whole countryside (I Samuel, xvii). Still later David became king, and years and years after his death Bethlehem people were proud to call the place where he had spent his boyhood "David's City."

And time went on, and on.

Then, a little more than nineteen hundred years ago, that same Bethlehem became the scene of still another story—one that has become the most widely known story in the whole round world. It is a story which has been told in every country on earth, and printed in every language that has any sort of alphabet. People have studied each language carefully, to be sure just which words would best correspond with the words in which the story was first written down; indeed, it had to be thus translated for us, for it was first written in Greek words, like this:—

καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὁ αγγελος

But persons who knew both English and Greek wrote it out in the English words, which we find now in the second chapter of the Book of Luke.

And it came to pass, in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.

And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem (because he was of the house and lineage of David) to be taxed, with Mary his espoused wife. And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night. And, lo! the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid.

And the angel said unto them: "*Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.*"

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying: "*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.*"

And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another: "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us."

And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.

[Another writer, who also wrote in Greek, added this story of twelve days later. We can read it in English in the second chapter of the Book of Matthew.]

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the King, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying: "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east and are come to worship him."

When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him: "In Bethlehem of Judea; for thus it is written by the prophet: 'And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Juda; for out of thee shall come a Governor that shall rule my people Israel.' "

Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said: "Go and search diligently for the young child, and when ye have found him bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also."

When they had heard the king they departed; and, lo! the star which they saw in the east went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child, with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshipped him; and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts—gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

THE CHRISTMAS STAR

The star looked down on Bethlehem
That night so long ago,
And in its soft and radiant light
The town was all aglow.

It drew the Wise Men from afar
Across the desert sands,
They came with worship in their hearts,
And gifts within their hands.

It stood above a lowly inn,
Where Mary and the Child
Received their homage and their gifts
Among the cattle mild.

Oh, would that star arise again,
And joy and gladness bring
To herald to a weary world
The Coming of a King!

—*Lida E. Voight.*

We bless and praise Thee, O God, for the great gift of Thy goodness in Him Whose life and work we commemorate this day. We would pay the glad homage of our gratitude and love at the lowly cradle in which Jesus was laid when He was born to bless the world: and would echo in our hearts the heavenly song of Peace on earth, goodwill toward men. May the bright promise of His gospel of love be fulfilled in us, and Thy kingdom come, and Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. *Amen.*—(*Selected.*)

Let joy be yours at Christmas Time,
The joy of truth and love sublime;
For as the Life of the Christ Child grew
'Twas love of Truth that kept Him true.

His Father, Ours! O blessed word!
Blest beyond all that our ears have heard!
Let this bring peace and love sublime,—
And all hearts sing at the Christmas Time.

CHRISTMAS

THE Christmas carol is dear to the human heart because it is a song of spiritual optimism. To pessimism the heavens are closed and silent; the world has no windows opening toward the Infinite. Pessimism cannot sing, because it has no hope, and cannot pray, because it has no faith. . . . Let not the lesser interests of this life close our hearing to the angel-song which never dies upon the air. The star of hope never sets, and God's revelations are from everlasting to everlasting.—*Abraham M. Rihbany.*

WITH OUR HOME-KEEPERS

FAVORITE RECIPES

Souffle.—1 cupful crabmeat, 1 egg, ½ tablespoon minced parsley, 1 teaspoon lemon juice, 1 teaspoon orange juice, 1½ cupfuls white sauce, ½ cup grated cheese, salt and cayenne. Add yolk of egg to sauce and beat well. Add cayenne, salt, cheese, meat, lemon and orange juice, and white of egg stiffly beaten. Mix carefully. Pour into baking dish and bake in medium oven. Sprinkle parsley over top and serve immediately.

Cabbage and Cheese.—One head medium cabbage. Salt to taste. Cut and cook 20 minutes in boiling water, drain and place in baking dish in layers with cheese, cream sauce and bread crumbs between layers. Bread crumbs and butter on top and bake 40 minutes in moderate oven. *Cream Sauce.*—2 tablespoons flour, 2 tablespoons melted butter, 1 pint milk. Put this sauce between layers of cabbage and cheese.

Gingerbread.—¼ cup butter, ¼ cup sugar, ½ cup molasses, ½ cup boiling water, 1¼ cups flour, 1 egg, ½ teaspoon cinnamon, clove and ginger, 1 teaspoon baking powder, 1 teaspoon soda. Cream butter and sugar. Mix all dry ingredients, add liquid and, last, well-beaten egg. Bake, cut in squares, and take out on spatula.

Hungarian Goulash.—Cook 1½ cups rice and set aside. Fry 1 lb. hamburger meat in butter and set aside. Cut six medium-sized onions in very small pieces and mix with rice and meat. Mix all with 2 cans condensed tomato soup and 1 can mushrooms, and bake 1½ to 2 hours in slow oven. This will serve about 12 people.

HANDY HINTS

When peeling apples for dumplings or stewing, to prevent them from getting brown and soft put them in a basin with cold water and a little salt as each one is cut up.

To remove brown marks from dishes, caused by baking in the oven, rub them well with damp salt; wash off and repeat.

To clean rust and stains from tin, rub them well with the cut surface of a raw potato, dipped in fine cleaning powder.

To prevent clothes from freezing in the winter, add a handful or more of salt to the last rinsing water.

To whiten handkerchiefs or linen, wash as usual, then take one quart of cold water, add one teaspoon of cream of tartar, and soak them over night.

If the cellar stairs are dark—and most of them are—paint the top and bottom steps white to avoid uncertainty and perhaps a bad fall.

If the toes of brown shoes are scuffed, paint them with iodine, and then polish them as usual.

CLERK: "Can you let me off tomorrow afternoon, sir? My wife wants me to go shopping with her."

Employer: "Certainly not. We are too busy."

Clerk: "Thank you very much, sir. That'll suit me very nicely."

A TABLE OF WEIGHTS

A TABLE of weights will help you to a certain extent in judging how much you should weigh, but you can't accept it as an absolute standard, for two women of exactly the same height can be exactly the same weight, and yet one will look much fatter than the other. They say such people have "light bones." Another reason is that some women are all firm muscle and others flabby fat; the flabby ones, of course, will actually measure ever so much more than the sturdy ones.

Besides this, all insurance tables (I am printing one of them below) are too generous in their allowance of weight. A woman, 5 feet 10 inches, for instance, should weigh 147 pounds at the age of 20, and from this go on up to 165 at the age of 60. This is all right from the point of view of doctors and insurance statisticians, but from the point of view of a beauty doctor she is needlessly fat, besides which, doctors will tell you that after 30 years of age fat does not necessarily mean health.

	Years				
Height	*20*	*30*	*40*	*50*	*60*
5 ft. —	112	120	124	127	127
5 ft. 1 in.	114	122	126	129	129
5 ft. 2 in.	117	124	128	131	131
5 ft. 3 in.	120	127	131	134	134
5 ft. 4 in.	123	130	134	137	137
5 ft. 5 in.	127	134	138	141	141
5 ft. 6 in.	131	138	142	145	145
5 ft. 7 in.	135	142	146	149	150
5 ft. 8 in.	139	146	151	154	155
5 ft. 9 in.	143	150	156	159	160
5 ft. 10 in.	147	155	161	164	165
5 ft. 11 in.	151	160	167	170	170

—*Clipped.*

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB

Send all offers and requests for this department to Mrs. H. A. Stevens, 25 Beacon St., Boston, Mass.

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card asking "*Shall* I send such a book to such a person?" before sending it, else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Stevens, saying that you *have* sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send those to the Book Club to be printed here.

SPECIAL NOTICES

It will greatly aid those who are sending books, magazines, cards, and so forth, if all our correspondents who send requests for their children will take pains to mention their names and ages. Lacking such information, one is likely to make mistakes; for a boy of twelve and a girl of seven are not usually interested in the same things.

When requesting books for the first time, correspondents should always give, as reference, the name and address of their clergyman.

When correspondents move to a new address, notice should be sent either to our headquarters, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass., or to those persons who have been sending books and magazines.

It is necessary to state positively that the Cheerful Letter Exchange is not a "clothing bureau" and not a "charitable" society in the usual sense of the word. We do not undertake to send correspondents money, clothing or household goods. Letters asking for that sort of assistance cannot receive attention. Letters not signed cannot be printed.

Many people do care for just the kind of friendly service for which we are organized. We limit our efforts to them and their wishes.

Those who enjoy receiving books and magazines are asked to remember that they, in their turn, can give much pleasure if they will take pains to write to the persons who send such reading matter. In cases where no word of response goes back—not even to say that the books or magazines were received—senders may suppose the parcels were not welcome. Let us each do our share.

REQUESTS

1. Mrs. A. C. Hottinger, Hebron, Ohio, wishes to thank all *Cheerful Letter* friends for past favors. She is a helpless invalid, confined to her bed and gets very lonely. Post cards and pictures, bits of lace and ribbon, or a good book to read, would bring cheer and gladness at Christmas time.

2. Since Mrs. Alice Barker, formerly of Dott, W. Va., has moved to Springton, W. Va., Box 77, she has not received her mail regularly. She would be glad to be remembered at Christmas time with cards and reading, as the winters are so long and lonesome.

3. Wouldn't some one like to send a few spools of thread to Mrs. R. J. Bonds, Shirley, Ark., R. 2, Box 36?

4. Mrs. E. F. Lowe, 615 W. 7th Street, Rector, Ark., is an invalid, very lonely, and eager for reading. Please, some one send her a good Christmas story, or a regular subscription to a magazine, that it may remind her every month that she is not forgotten.

5. My husband and I are alone on the farm this winter. I haven't walked a step for five years, but I can use my hands to do light sewing. We would like "Tales and Sketches," or any good story book, bits of embroidery cotton and transfer patterns. How I would love a bulb or hardy plant for my window! Mrs. Nora R. Colley, Clarkton, Va.

6. It has been a long time since Mrs. Dewey C. Duncan of Big Sandy, W. Va., has heard from *Cheerful Letter* friends. She would like to be remembered with magazines, quilt pieces or embroidery thread. She is not in good health.

7. Mrs. Maude Emerson, Rupert, Ark., lives a long way from any railroad center, and gets very lonely. She asks for good books for her boys, 21, 17, and 15 years old, and a magazine for herself, to help pass the long winter evenings.

8. Mrs. Baxter Neaves, Jefferson, N. C., who has been ill for a long time, writes she is better, and hopes to be remembered with light reading, and toys for the children at Christmas time.

9. Mrs. Lelah Mabe, Lawsonville, N. C., wishes to thank the *Cheerful Letter* friends who have sent reading to her, and hopes her little family of three boys, ages 6, 4, and 1½, will be remembered at Christmas time. It would mean more than words can express.

10. Would someone be willing to loan "The Conqueror," by Gertrude Atherton, to Mrs. Elva Robinson, Marion, Va.? She wants very much to read it, and would return it, if so desired.

11. Mrs. Mildred Alley, who is again teaching at Walnut Cove, N. C., wishes to thank all who sent her material last year. It was such a help, and she asks again for "seat work" for the little children, also a dictionary, a map of the United States, a religious magazine, or any helps on

"plays and games." She is teaching six grades, and taking a correspondence course herself, and is very grateful for any help for her school.

12. Mrs. Emma L. Blankenship, Roanoke, Va., R. 6, Box 107B, asks us to please print her thanks to all who have contributed to her pleasure. She has three boys and three girls, and she would appreciate suitable reading, from first grade to eighth, also drawing and painting books for her baby girl, 6 years old.

13. Mrs. Bettie Sexton, Grassy Creek, N. C., R. 2, Box 102, has received a package of pieces, without a name, and wishes to acknowledge same, and sends grateful thanks through this column.

14. Mrs. Bernice Martin, Bassett, Va., R. F. D. 4, asks that her letter of thanks be printed. She now has a darling baby girl, about 1½ years old, and would appreciate quilt pieces and a toy for baby. They are alone a great deal, and it has been a long time since she has heard from any *Cheerful Letter* friends.

15. A mother of eight children, four boys and four girls, ages 14 years to one month, would appreciate good reading for the older ones and pictures or toys for the younger ones, and quilt pieces for herself. Mrs. Della Clay, Malakoff, Texas, R. F. D. 2.

16. Mrs. Lula Booker, Sylvester, Ga., R. 4, would appreciate good reading, quilt pieces and thread. She has two boys and two girls in school, and anything for them to read would be gratefully received.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

Mrs. Alice Barker, from Dott, W. Va., to Springton, W. Va., Box 77.

Mrs. Sallie McLendon, from No. 100 to No. 234, R. 1, Wadesboro, N. C.

Mrs. R. J. Venoble, from Camden, Ark., to Grady, Ark.

GOD, LET ME GIVE

God, let me be a giver, and not one
  Who only takes and takes unceasingly.
God, let me give, so that not just my own
  But others' lives as well may richer be.

Let me give out whatever I may hold
  Of what material things life may be heaping,
Let me give raiment, shelter, food, or gold,
  If these are, through Thy bounty, in my keeping.

But greater than such fleeting treasures, may
  I give my faith and hope and cheerfulness,
Belief and dreams and joy and laughter gay,
  Some lonely soul to bless.

—*Selected.*

"GOOD HEALTH" NOTES

The following delightful bit of philosophic nonsense is by Barbara Young, poet and presiding genius of "Poetry House," New York City, known as the home of poetry, and a rallying place for authors and kindred souls.

Erudition

I went to market
  One Spring day
To buy a load
  Of new-mown hay.
The market-man
  Was filled with glee.
"Hay is a summer
  Fruit," said he.

And on a sultry
  Afternoon
About the thirty-
  First of June,
I took my purse
  And said, "I'll go
And purchase me
  A drift of snow."

The market-man
  Looked down at me,
And puffed his corn-
  Cob lustily.
And winked and laughed
  And shook his head.
"Snow is a Winter
  Fruit," he said.

And so I've learned
  There's no such thing
As new-mown hay
  In early Spring.
And I have wisely
  Come to know
That June is not
  The time for snow.

And now I seek
  To find the reason
I always want
  What's out of season.

Housekeepers learn, perhaps through sad experience, the value of seasonal selection of foods. Winter vegetables are exceedingly wholesome, and may be served as novelties if cooked in various ways. Several make tempting pies, and all can go into the soup pot. We wonder how many recall the French way of cooking soup with left-overs and stock. With colder weather making hot things palatable, it is worth repeating:

Simmer vegetables (cooked or raw) for three

minutes in fat, beef, butter or bacon, in covered pot; add water or, better still, liquid in which vegetables have been cooked, and again simmer for one hour, mashing vegetables thoroughly in the pot and pressing as much as possible into the soup through a colander. Milk improves the flavor and increases the nutritive value, but it should be added when ready to serve, not cooked with vegetables. If too thin for the family taste, add a can of concentrated soup as thickening rather than flour. This will be found an excellent preventive of colds, so prevalent at this time.

Speaking of colds, Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, is conducting an investigation as to their characteristics and causes, having enlisted a number of families whose members will submit to examinations and report weekly to hospital physicians.

During the recent week of meetings of the Safety Congress in New York City, fifty thousand posters on safety were distributed in the schools, one in each classroom, and teachers were asked to give lessons in safety. More than twenty thousand children of school age were killed in accidents last year, and it is hoped this death toll may be reduced through widespread education. Doubtless some of our readers followed the Safety Congress addresses by radio.

Another interesting item regarding children was the special feature of the Community Sings in Central Park during the summer (also "on the air"). At a signal the youngsters of all ages scrambled out from their benches into the open space in front of the band stand for the Children's Sing, and then, falling in line behind the leader, Harry Barnhart, marched around the mall to a marching song.

The necessity for keen observation in nature work was cleverly demonstrated in the exhibit of the Children's Museum of Brooklyn at the Children's Fair held in October at the Natural History Museum, New York City. In the small place available, as many specimens as possible were placed in as nearly natural surroundings as could be reproduced, so that their protective coloring concealed them from all but the keenest observer.

"A Novel Course in Etiquette, with Dances and Teas Thrills High School Pupils"

Most schoolrooms are constructed with an eye to utility rather than furnishings, but there is one room at the Thomas Jefferson High School, Brooklyn, New York, for which the furnishings are selected as carefully as for the most tastefully fitted drawing room. This is the room used for the course in "Social Forms," now entering its second year, the aim of which is to prepare the pupils to meet people in later life in social and business intercourse. The room is furnished, not as a classroom, but as a combined living and dining room of an apartment.

Both Dr. Elias Lieberman, principal of the school, and Mrs. Gertrude Hoeg, in charge of the course, declared that the first year's experiment with the course proved very successful, and that the pupils are eager to take it. The course this year is made up of ten classes, each composed of twenty to twenty-five students. This is the only course of the kind given in the city schools in which both boys and girls are included in the classes.

The course this year will be organized so as to take up one by one the things that occur in the daily lives of the students from early morning until late at night, including the various ways in which they might spend their leisure time, and to deal with those activities from the standpoint of what, for the want of a better term, we call "Social Forms." The Social Forms room is used for "laboratory work," including such things as the proper manner of setting the table and of meeting callers, and manners at the table. Further laboratory work is carried on by giving teas and dances in the room, at which the etiquette of these social functions is considered. The boys and girls are encouraged to ask questions about the reasons for the rules of etiquette which they are taught.

This course was introduced, Dr. Lieberman says, as part of the school's program for preparing the students for "living fully." He hopes to be able to extend it in the near future, if this can be fitted into the curriculum, for he feels that in the rush for diplomas the amenities of life are likely to be forgotten.—*From the New York Times.*

This is the school where so much has been done to evolve the characters of the pupils, much of the credit of which is due to Dr. John M. Crossley.

Spiritual Budgets Suggested

So much is said of living by budget, it is a relief to have requirements other than material stressed. In speaking to soldiers at camp, the Rev. Henry P. Darlington urged the keeping of a character and spiritual budget along with the household one. He said that two classes of persons need them: "Those who are down and out, with everything apparently against them, and those who are up and out, materially up and spiritually out."

Speaking at a recent conference, Prof. Harold O. Rugy of Teachers' College, New York City, said that the revolution of Progressive Education has come because the artist has stepped across the threshold of the classroom; and a plea has just been made for beauty in hospitals as a curative measure.

Laura R. Donnell.

CARRYING ON

THERE was only one thing to do. Barbara Ann crushed the green tam down over her sleek black bob, pulled on her warm but shabby coat, and started for Sunshine House and a conference with Mrs. Mollie.

On her way to Sunshine House she had to pass a big white house on a shady corner, with wide lawns sloping back from the elm-bordered sidewalk, and a broad white walk where sun and shadows wove a twisting pattern. Barbara Ann's feet started to turn in at the gate, then with a wistful glance at the silent house she hurried on her errand.

Aunt Sallie French, who lived in the big white house, and who was loved by everybody in the town, especially by all the boys and girls, was in the hospital, very, very ill, the victim of a hit-and-run driver a few days before—and Barbara Ann was both sorrowful and troubled.

Christmas was only two weeks away! And for twenty years, ever since Sunshine House opened its doors to motherless and fatherless kiddies, Aunt Sallie French had given a Christmas party with "all the fixin's." It was only one of countless kindly acts throughout twelve months of every year, most of which were unknown except to the one directly benefitted, but everyone in town knew about the wonderful celebration at Christmas time, and it was an honor greatly coveted by the boys and girls of the neighborhood to be allowed to help Aunt Sallie in her preparations.

Mrs. Mollie Brown, who mothered the family of twenty youngsters at Sunshine House, and whose hands and heart were filled to overflowing by everyday duties and cares, would never be able to carry out the plans for the party without the assistance of her old friend. She met Barbara Ann at the door with a grave face.

"Morning, Mrs. Mollie. Can you spare five minutes?"

A smile broke through the clouds. "Sure I can, my dear. Come right in."

"I've come about the party," explained the girl when they were seated in the cozy living room. "Of course we know Aunt Sallie can't do anything this year. But it will break her heart if the kiddies don't have their Christmas as usual, and I've helped her so many times, and she has told me so much about what she was planning for this Christmas that I believe we can carry it through. If everybody will help we can, and that will do more than anything else to make Aunt Sallie well again."

In spite of herself there was a quiver in the brave voice and a mist in the dark eyes, but the little mouth and chin were resolute. Barbara Ann was never made for a quitter.

The five minutes lengthened into half an hour, and Mrs. Mollie's heart was comforted and her courage reawakened. As Barbara Ann went out she paused a moment to look into the sunny nursery where a merry game was in progress. They were not old enough to really miss Aunt Sallie from their party, a number of them had come during the year, but they would all be looking for Santa Claus and the much talked of Christmas tree. Bless their little hearts! They should not be disappointed.

Barbara Ann swiftly marshalled her forces. Every dependable boy and girl in town was called into consultation. News reached the parents who promised co-operation. The whole town buzzed with plans for the party. Yet underneath all the excitement was an undercurrent of anxiety, for Aunt Sallie was not gaining as they had hoped.

One day Barbara Ann went to the hospital to see her. She had only been allowed in the little white room a very few times and then for just a couple of minutes. But today the nurse called her aside and said:

"I think Mrs. French is worrying about something, Miss Barbara. She is too weak to talk, but once in a while I think I catch a word or two."

The nurse was a newcomer to the little town and knew nothing about Sunshine House or the parties there at Christmas time.

Barbara Ann knew at once what was troubling Aunt Sallie. "May I talk with her just a few minutes?" she pleaded. "I won't excite her or let her talk to me, but I think I know what is the matter and I have some news that will make her happy."

So Barbara Ann went into the little room with a bright smile and bent to kiss the frail little woman, who smiled back at her, weakly.

"I've something nice to tell you," the girl said, drawing a chair close beside the bed and speaking very softly. Then in a few sentences she told Aunt Sallie about the plans for the party, of how all the town was interested, of the big tree that had been given, the bags of candy that were to be made and filled, the toys that the merchants had contributed, and then came the best news of all.

"Think of it, Aunt Sallie, Tom Lawton has promised to be Santa Claus."

Into the pain-filled eyes came an eager light, and Barbara Ann bent down to catch a whispered word or two.

"Tell—Tom—I'm—so—glad."

Barbara Ann nodded silently. For two or three years Aunt Sallie had tried in vain to win over laughing, careless, happy-go-lucky, devil-may-care Tom Lawton. He was almost the only lad in town who had resisted her gentle persuasion. She believed that underneath the outer shell of youthful bravado there was much

that was worth while, and she had grieved over her failure to win this particularly exasperating but lovable blacksheep. At last, in some way, Barbara Ann had succeeded.

The days sped swiftly by. Sunshine House took on a gala air. Greens and holly berries were twined everywhere, wreaths in the windows brightened by huge red bows told their message of cheer to passers-by. The children were on tiptoe, and Mrs. Mollie went about with a song on her lips in spite of weariness. Now and then, however, the song would cease suddenly, as the thought came of dear Aunt Sallie, still suffering in the hospital.

Barbara Ann was a constant visitor, always smiling and cheerful, bringing small gifts of fruit and flowers from the boys and girls who loved Aunt Sallie, hanging a great wreath in the window, placing a crimson poinsettia on the table where it was like a flame of Christmas fire to light the quiet little room, and telling enough of the plans and preparations for the Christmas party so that the little woman who must miss it this year would still feel that she was having a share in its joy.

But as the days went by Aunt Sallie grew weaker; even Barbara Ann was not deceived. She even began to wonder if strength would ever come again. How could they spare Aunt Sallie!

On the afternoon of the day before Christmas, while Barbara Ann and Mrs. Mollie were putting the last bright trimmings on the tree, a telephone call came from the hospital. Barbara Ann was wanted at once. She looked at Mrs. Mollie with startled eyes and her lips trembled.

"Don't say anything to anyone else, please," she said as she snatched her cap and coat and ran out.

It was only a little way, but it seemed to stretch out into miles. At last, however, she was on the threshold, and one glance into the tired face on the pillow told her the truth.

With a smothered sob she threw herself down beside the bed, one arm thrown gently across the frail shoulders of Aunt Sallie. She felt a soft touch on her cheek and looked up with brimming eyes.

Suddenly strength came into Aunt Sallie's voice. A smile broke over her face, and she spoke to Barbara Ann clearly, confidently.

"Promise me you'll carry on, dear." It was a question and a command.

The girl's spirit responded. Her young eyes met the old ones frankly as she answered.

"I'll carry on."

A few moments later, alone, Barbara Ann went back to Sunshine House to begin to keep her promise.

She had to tell Mrs. Mollie the truth and for a few moments almost forgot her own grief in the endeavor to comfort the older woman and to inspire her with the courage to go forward with what they had planned to do.

It was five o'clock. In half an hour the children would have their supper and at six o'clock they would all march to the great living room where the tree had been set up, singing Christmas carols as they went from room to room. Santa Claus was due sometime before half-past six. He had left a note by the fireplace two or three nights before, which one of the kiddies had found and had brought triumphantly to Mrs. Mollie.

Everything went according to schedule. Although there was no mystery about the tree, for many little hands had helped in its trimming, yet the wonder of it, lighted with many colored lights and hung with shining trinkets, brought forth shouts of glee when the little procession reached the doorway. Almost at once the sound of jingling bells was heard outside, and amid cries of "Santa, Santa," quick steps were heard in the hall, and the jolly old Saint was there.

For an hour the fun was fast and furious. Barbara Ann's laugh was quick and ready, she threw herself into the gay little party as if determined to outdo even the most hilarious of the youngsters. Mrs. Mollie bravely seconded her, although her eyes would have betrayed her to one who knew her well. Once in a while both were conscious that Santa Claus was covertly watching them in a somewhat puzzled way.

At last it was over: every child, tired and happy, was safely in bed, each hugging some treasured gift and thinking eagerly of the next day, with a dinner of turkey and unusual goodies, and all the new toys and games to play with and enjoy.

Barbara Ann said a quiet "Good night" to Mrs. Mollie and slipped swiftly away into the darkness. She went a long way around to avoid even a glimpse of the hospital, but her way home led past the old white house where she and Aunt Sallie had spent so many happy hours together.

The girl stood still for a few minutes in the shadow of the trees, staring at the empty window, where so often she had seen a smiling, welcoming face. In her eyes were tears which brimmed over and ran unheeded down over her cold cheeks, but a strange peace and joy was in her heart. She had kept her promise to Aunt Sallie and she spoke the words aloud, yet very softly.

"I carried on, dear Aunt Sallie."

A husky, boyish voice came to her out of the dark and then she saw Tom Lawton standing, half hidden by one of the great elms. He came up to her.

"You're a brick, Barbara Ann," he said. "I knew all the time. You did carry on."

Barbara Ann held out her hand. "Thanks, Tom," she said. "You helped." She paused, then went on steadily.

"Someone must carry on for Aunt Sallie right

along, you know. Mrs. Mollie and I are going to try to do it. Will you help us, Tom?"

The boy's young voice was very earnest as he promised.

"Yes, Barbara Ann, I'll help carry on."

And in the distance they heard the Christmas chimes ringing out their message of good-will and peace to men.

MY SHIPS

Ah, years ago—no matter where,
Beneath what roof or sky,
I dreamed of days, perhaps remote,
When ships of mine that were afloat
Should in the harbor lie,
And all the costly freights they bore
Enrich me both in land and store.

What dreams there were of argosies,
Laden in many a clime;
So stoutly built, so bravely manned,
No fear but they would come to land
At their appointed time,
And I should see them, one by one,
Close furl their sails in summer's sun.

And then, while men in wonder stood,
My ships I would unlade;
My treasures vast they should behold,
And to my learning and my gold
What honors would be paid!
And though the years might come and go
I could but wiser, richer grow.

In later years—no matter where,
Beneath what roof or sky,
I saw the dreams of days remote
Fade out, and ships that were afloat,
As drifting wrecks go by,
And all the many freights they bore
Lay fathoms deep, or strewed the shore.

While ships of which I never thought
Were sailing o'er the sea;
And one by one with costlier lade
In safety all the voyage made,
And brought their freights to me.
What I had lost but trifle seemed
And I was richer than I dreamed.

No wondering crowd with envious eye,
Looked on my treasures rare;
Yet they were weighter far than gold,
They still increase as I grow old,
And are beyond compare.
Would all the restless hearts I see
Had ships like those that came to me.

—*Selected.*

CHILD'S IMAGINATION

The grandmother put down her sewing and turned her head slightly to listen to the chatter which came from the next room. "I didn't know Jane had anyone in to play with her. Who is it?" she inquired of Jane's mother,

"She is alone," replied the mother. "She's playing with Rura."

The grandmother regarded her with puzzled old eyes.

"Who is Rura?" she asked.

"Rura is one of her imaginary little girls. She has two of them. The other she calls Emba."

The grandmother shook her head, and honest alarm glowed in her faded eyes. "There never was any insanity in our family," she finally mused. "I can't understand it. I wouldn't let her do it, Janie. It sounds spooky."

Imaginary playmates usually enter into the life of most children and are no occasion for alarm. Children who are alone a great deal generally create one or more characters to whom they talk. In a case like this, it is a sense of loneliness which fosters the imaginary children, and can be remedied by a conscious effort on the part of the mother.

Sometimes, though, even when a child has plenty of playmates, he suddenly takes unto himself a playmate of this type, and when it occurs under these conditions, it is well to listen to the conversations, the liberties given the imaginary child to find out if it doesn't arise from repressions, or restrictions thrown needlessly around the child. You will find, possibly, that the child is playing that the imaginary youngster can do the things he would *like* to do but which have been forbidden him. Then, it is a matter of using your judgment in withdrawing as many hampering ties about his freedom as you can consistently do.

If your child has created characters and plays with them continually, suggest that he help you with whatever you are doing. Give him the responsibility of part of the care of his room. Include him in the cake baking, in the sprinkling of the lawn, in your general daily activities for a week or so. Keep him near you and talk to him, and if possible, invite little people over to play with him often. He will outgrow the imaginary playmates, and unless you allow this pastime to grow to the abnormal proportions where it pushes out any desire for normal companionship, it will not harm him. In fact, it points to an imagination which is well developed and capable of creating. Encourage it in story telling by the child, later writing little tales, or making up songs. But balance this vivid imagination with contact, so that selfishness and day-dreaming may be avoided.—*Selected.*

A PAGE FOR THE CHILDREN

THE STORY OF THE BABY JESUS

One day a man and a woman traveled slowly along a road. The man's name was Joseph. The woman was Mary, his wife. Mary rode upon a donkey. Joseph walked in front and led the donkey.

Joseph and Mary were not the only people traveling that day. There were a great many men and women. Some rode on donkeys. Some rode on camels. Some walked. It was winter and cold, and night was coming on, so they were hurrying to get to the little town of Bethlehem before dark. But Mary was very tired. She could not hurry. And so she and Joseph were left far behind.

At last they came to Bethlehem. The inn, which was a kind of hotel, was full of people. There was no room for them in the inn. What could they do? Mary was so very tired.

Now back of the inn was a dark cave running into the rocks. Here cows and sheep were cared for at night. Here Joseph brought Mary. And here, that night, a wonderful thing happened. A baby boy was born. It was the little Lord Jesus.

There was no crib for him, but in the cave there were mangers, where hay and grain were put for the animals to eat. And so Mary wrapped her baby in long white swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger.

And there were shepherds in the field, keeping watch by night over their flock. The sheep and lambs were quietly sleeping, but these shepherds kept awake to watch and see that no lion or bear came near to hurt them.

As they watched a light shone about them. It was not the sun. The stars had never shone so brightly. They crouched close together. They were afraid. There beside them stood an angel, bright and shining, and the angel said to them:

"Be not afraid, for I bring you good news. For there is born to you this day in Bethlehem the Lord Jesus. You shall find the baby wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger."

And all at once the sky was filled with angels, singing. This was their song:

"Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased."

Then the song ended, and the light faded, and the shepherds were left alone in the quiet and the darkness. They were left alone, excited and wondering over the good news that the angel had brought.

And it came to pass, when the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said, "Let us now go to Bethlehem, and find the Lord Jesus."

They hurried through the fields to Bethlehem. There the houses were dark and the people slept. They went to the inn. There, too, the people and their donkeys and their camels were sleeping. They made their way to the cave behind. There they found Mary and Joseph, and there they found the little Lord Jesus, wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.

The shepherds looked and wondered. They told about the angel's good news and the song in the sky. All that heard it wondered. Mary never forgot what the shepherds said. Often she thought of it—the angel's good news and the song in the sky. And the shepherds went back to their sheep, thanking God for His gift of the little Lord Jesus, in His crib, lined with hay.—*Beginners' Stories, Pilgrim Press.*

THE CHRISTMAS MANGER HYMN

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay—
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
The little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky,
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

—*Martin Luther.*

SAYINGS

President Coolidge says: "The home is the cornerstone of the Nation. What the youth of the country need is not more public control through Government action, but more home control through parental action."

Herbert C. Hoover says: "We have not lost the dominance of the old-fashioned virtues of honesty, of neighborly service, of love of family and home, of faith in God, or of the purposes of our country. There is time to act if enough of us care, but not feebly and along bypaths."

NOON

When my hands are on my desk,
Waiting for the teacher's gong,
Black-eyed Ling and little Foo
Are asleep in old Hongkong.

Hans and Gretchen are at tea,
Alaskan kiddies just awake.
What strange clocks do they all have,
I'd like to know, for pity's sake!

—*Bernice Powell Peabody.*

THE BIBLE THEIR ONLY LAW CODE

For 400 years the Pamunkey or Powhatan tribe of Indians has lived on an island in the mouth of the Pamunkey River. The island is two miles wide and six miles long. The town or village is wheel-shaped, the streets radiating from the center in spoke-like fashion. Located about twenty-five miles from Richmond, Virginia, this group of "original Americans" for generations have had their own government, their only legal code the Holy Bible. As one enters one of their neat, clean cottages, one of the first things to catch the visitor's eye are the several Bibles on the table—three volumes, if the table be round, four if square, one at each corner, and according to Mr. George A. Bowden, State Industrial Commissioner, the books bear every indication of regular use and study.

The tribal chief is elected every four years, the present incumbent, Chief Cook, having served for twenty years. Every member of the colony must report annually to the chief, which is done the third Sunday in August. Failure to report for seven years brings the penalty of loss of tribal connection. One hundred twenty-seven families constitute the citizenship of this unique community.

Contrary to the commonly accepted opinion the North American Indians, according to Chief Cook, are not worshippers of the sun, moon and stars, but worship Almighty God, to them personified by the Great Spirit. Standing on a busy corner of Broad Street, Richmond, one evening a few years ago, talking to Mr. Bowden, the Chief called his attention to a large electric sign over a theater across the street. Said the Chief, "When you look at that sign, what does it suggest to you? Does it not suggest some power, some unseen force back of it? Just so we are sometimes compelled, when seeking to bring light into the mind and soul of some stubborn Indian brother, to direct his attention to God's creations, the planets in the heavens, in order to help him grasp the thought of a greater power back of it all—God, whom most Indians know as the Great Spirit."

There is but one church on the island, a Baptist, to which 95 per cent of the inhabitants belong. Should a member desire to unite with a *white* church, at some other point, his letter is not granted until he has appeared before the congregation, announcing his forgiveness of any and all grievances he may hold against any of the members, at the same time requesting the pardon for past sins, committed toward anyone in the church, whereupon follows a "happy handshaking," similar to our extending the hand of fellowship.

There is no peace officer, nor jail, on the island. There has never been a murder, not a case of criminal assault, and but one case of theft, when, upon apprehension of the thief, he was exiled from the island, finally being permitted to return to attend the burial services of his aged parents, at which time he was put on probation for five years.

In case of death of the father in a family, the Chief appoints a cabinet of seven men to conduct the little farm and administer the affairs for the widow. At the harvest season and meat-killing time, all products are so divided that every family shall share equally, according to the number in each household. Farms consist of ten acres, with house, free of taxation.

It is interesting to learn that Chief Powhatan, upon being asked by John Rolfe for the hand of his daughter, Pocahontas, in marriage, insisted that consent first be obtained from King James of England, before granting the Englishman's request. A copy of Rolfe's letter to his sovereign is carefully preserved by the descendants of the historic chieftain.

Although the older folk still use the tribal tongue, they insist that the younger generation shall speak English exclusively.

Some of the young women are clerks in Richmond department stores. Quite a number of the young men are in Philadelphia, preparing to become automobile mechanics and chauffeurs. At home the men work in the sawmill, at farming, fishing, and a number of other things which provide them a vastly different living from that of their ancestors.

Every year about Thanksgiving time, the Chief, accompanied by a group of his people, visits the Virginia governor, bringing the proverbial tribute of game as provided in a treaty made many years ago, the braves and Indian maidens on this occasion dressing in their native costumes. —*H. E. Almquist, in "The Gideon."*

INVITED GUESTS

A crowd of troubles passed him by,
As he with courage waited:
He said, "Where do you troubles fly
When you are thus belated?"

"We go," they said, "to those who mope,
Who look on life dejected,
Who weakly say good-bye to hope:
We go—where we're expected."

—*Life.*

Live honestly, others may not know it, but you will know it yourself.

Ambition, like a horse, should have a curb.

The wise will grow wiser by the mistakes and misfortunes of others.

Poverty quickens the brain in some, and creates what otherwise would be lost.

FAITH

With constant faith, surpassing doubt,
I stand and watch the tide run out;
That 'twill come back, I say to you,
I do not know—and yet I do.

At eventide I see the day
Put night on guard, and go away;
Will morning come, the mists to woo?
I do not know—and yet I do.

I see the sere that autumns bring;
Will verdure come with waking spring?
My faith alone can answer true—
I do not know—and yet I do.

We see the loved one droop and die;
Hath Heaven a brighter life on high?
Is death the vale that leads thereto?
I do not know—and yet I do.

—*Selected.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

Life is like—

A sieve—the only way to keep from falling through is to grow big.

A highway—the safest travel is on the right side.

A bank—you can't take something out that you have not put in.

An à la carte restaurant—your satisfaction depends upon your choices.

A mountain—you must climb to the better views.

A band—we need not play the same parts, but we must play in harmony.

An automobile—you need brake control to match your horsepower.

—*Rev. Roy L. Smith.*

A recent poem by Mr. Rockefeller convinces us of his great wisdom in choosing a career in the oil business.—*Arkansas Gazette.*

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE

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To cheer and comfort those who are ill, lonely, or discouraged, through the exchange of letters and by gifts of books and magazines.

To help those who live far from schools, or who wish to continue their studies by means of correspondence with a teacher.

To give to those living far from church some of the helps which churches give. One good sermon or similar article is printed in each number. These sermons are never doctrinal, but present only such simple religious truths and principles as are agreed on by all churches.

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